



Car Washing and Water Quality

What's the big deal?

- Car wash water contains a mixture of detergents, oils, heavy metals, and other pollutants.
- Washwater that flows into the storm drain isn't treated and flows directly to streams, lakes, and Puget Sound, where it can kill aquatic plants and animals.
- All soaps can harm our waterways, by breaking the surface tension of water and lowering oxygen levels, and delivering oils and heavy metals to surface waters.
- Most soaps also contain phosphorus—a nutrient that causes unwanted algae blooms in surface waters.

Car Washing is **NOT** illegal!

- But allowing soapy, dirty washwater to flow to Edmonds' storm drains is.
- The City of Edmonds has adopted an educational, not enforcement, approach.
- There are many practical options that keep the dirty, soapy washwater out of the storm drain (see other side for details)!



What should I do to keep our waters clean?

- Take your car to a commercial car wash facility that discharges to the sewer system.
- When washing your car at home, have the soapy washwater and rinse water flow to a lawn or vegetated area instead of to the storm drain.
- Use waterless car wash products, available at auto parts stores and online. Saves water too!!
- Find a community car wash event that uses a car wash kit which disposes the wash water to the sewer.
- Use a shut-off nozzle to conserve water, and only use a small amount of soap.
- Choose a soap that has little or no phosphates, is biodegradable, and doesn't say "Caution" or "Danger".
- If applicable, ask your apartment/condo manager to purchase a SudSafe Car Wash Kit for use at your complex.

If you have questions, or would like to reserve a SudSafe Car Wash Kit for your community event, contact Mike Cawrse, Stormwater Engineering Technician at (425) 771-0220 x1322 or michael.cawrse@edmondswa.gov.



**It's our responsibility to keep our creeks, Lake Ballinger,
and Puget Sound clean!**

